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GLEN CANYON NRA - NEWS RELEASE

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Char Obergh

GLEN CANYON NATIONAL RECREATION AREA ANNOUNCES RELEASE OF FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR PERSONAL WATERCRAFT RULE-MAKING

PAGE,AZ Glen Canyon National Recreation Area Superintendent Kitty Roberts announces the release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Personal Watercraft Rule-Making for Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. The document will be available on the park's web site beginning Monday, May 12th at <http://www.nps.gov/glca/plan.htm>.

"The plan, developed with extensive public input and participation by local and state government agencies, examines three management alternatives and identifies the proposed actions related to visitor use zones and accessibility, developed areas, facilities, and recreational services," said Superintendent Roberts.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was made available for public comment in September 2002. The 60-day review and public comment period ended on November 27, 2002. Over 30,000 public and agency comments were received on the DEIS. National Park Service responses to public comments on the DEIS are provided in Volume II of the FEIS.

The alternatives presented in the DEIS were modified in the FEIS in response to the substantive public comments. All of the alternatives in the FEIS now include plans to conduct a 3-year pilot study to identify techniques and area restrictions to reduce visitor conflict between watercraft users and other visitors. This study will be used in the development of a comprehensive lake management plan to address all uses of Lake Powell.

Additionally, the preferred alternative was modified to include further personal watercraft use restrictions on the Dirty Devil River (along with use restrictions on the Colorado, Escalante, and San Juan Rivers that were part of the original preferred alternative in the DEIS) and effective January 1, 2013, personal watercraft that do not meet the Environmental Protection Agency Rule for gasoline sparked ignition marine engines will be prohibited.

The modified preferred alternative also includes a wakeless zone on a portion of the Escalante River. Educational program and materials would be enhanced to provide more

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information to visitors on watercraft use and safety as well as recreation area resources. Development of a monitoring program to continue to evaluate the effects of personal watercraft on recreation area resources is emphasized.

Issuing the FEIS is the first of three steps that need to be taken in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and final rule-making process to allow for continued use of personal watercraft at Lake Powell. The National Park Service will execute a Record of Decision (ROD) no sooner than 30 days following publication of the notice of availability of the FEIS by the Environmental Protection Agency in the *Federal Register*. Upon publication in the *Federal Register* a 30-day no action period allows interested parties time to review the document. The final step is to publish the Final Rule allowing for continued use as specified in the preferred alternative of the FEIS. The National Park Service anticipates the final rule to be published this summer.

Interested parties are encouraged to use the website to review the document. However, a limited number of hard copies and CD-ROM's are available by writing to Superintendent Kitty Roberts, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, P. O. Box 1507, Page, AZ 86040.

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